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SUBJECT: DAILY SUMMARY OF JAPANESE PRESS 10/11/07

Index:

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October 11, 2007

INDEX:

- (1) Prime minister at Lower House Budget Committee: Participation in ISAF may infringe on Constitution (Tokyo Shimbun)
- (2) Prime minister says SDF dispatch to Afghanistan under Constitution is difficult (Asahi)
- (3) Prime Minister Fukuda says at Lower House budget panel: Refueling is "an effective tool for international cooperation" (Mainichi)
- (4) "Next Lower House election will be my final decisive battle," Ozawa stresses at Rengo convention (Tokyo Shimbun)
- (5) Editorial: Now is not time to reach a conclusion on SDF participation in ISAF (Sankei)
- (6) Editorial: Questions still remain about possible oil diversion (Asahi)

- (7) MSDF-refueled USS Iwo Jima participated in Iraq war (Akahata)
- (8) Yokota base spills 5,600 liters of fuel (Asahi)
- (9) Poll on Fukuda cabinet, political parties, MSDF refueling mission (Yomiuri)
- (10) Japan-ROK joint poll on North Korea (Yomiuri)
- (11) Fiscal Reform Study Group resumes activities: Correction to growth strategy aimed at; Tug-of-war likely between Yosano, who attaches importance to fiscal reconstruction, and Hidenao Nakagawa (Mainichi)
- (12) Strong action, including economic sanctions, necessary toward Burma (Asahi)
- (13) How about food safety? BSE (Part 4): How to gain consumers' understanding of BSE risk (Asahi)
- (14) Editorial: DPJ has yet to reach consensus on antiterrorism (Mainichi)
- (Corrected copy) Diet debate: Defense minister learns from US that amount of fuel provided by MSDF to USS Kitty Hawk was 675,000 gallons (Yomiuri)

ARTICLES:

- (1) Prime minister at Lower House Budget Committee: Participation in ISAF may infringe on Constitution

TOKYO 00004775 002 OF 015

TOKYO SHIMBUN ONLINE  
October 11, 2007, 13:24

In a meeting of the House of Representatives Budget Committee this morning, Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda said that Japan's participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan as proposed by Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa "might lead to problems restricted in the Constitution. We are worried about that point." He thus pointed out the possibility that the participation might infringe on the Constitution, which prohibit the Self-Defense Force from engaging in operations that entail the use of force, thus indicating that Japan's participation would be difficult.

In this connection, Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura referred to Japan's assistance in the area of public welfare in Afghanistan and stressed the difficulty of such assistance at the present point of time. He said: "An evacuation advisory has been issued across Afghanistan. When (the government) has advised its private citizens to return to Japan, it will be difficult to send more civilians there." The prime minister echoed Komura, remarking: "It is not proper to make such a request under the current situation."

Asked about the Defense Ministry's recent correction to quadruple the amount of fuel by the Maritime Self-Defense Force to US supply ships in February 2003, Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba made this counterargument: "We have not performed our duties in a sloppy way. The ministry has not manipulated information at all."

- (2) Prime minister says SDF dispatch to Afghanistan under Constitution is difficult

ASAHI ONLINE  
October 11, 2007 12:29 PM

Asked about the possibility of dispatching SDF troops to Afghanistan, Prime Minister Fukuda indicated in a House of Representatives Budget Committee meeting this morning that it would be difficult under the current Constitution, which prohibits Self-Defense Force (SDF) troops from using armed force overseas. Fukuda said: "The dispatch may lead to problems listed in the

Constitution. We are worried about that point." This remark is apparently intended to represent his opposition to Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ozawa's idea of having SDF troops participate in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan based on a United Nations resolution.

Fukuda made the above remark in replying to a question by DPJ member Masaharu Nakagawa. Asked also about the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling operation in the Indian Ocean, Fukuda renewed his call for the DPJ's support for new legislation designed to extend the operation, saying: "We are still considering every possibility. Of such, we believe the refueling operation is a very effective means of Japan's international cooperation. We want you to support our plan to continue the MSDF mission."

(3) Prime Minister Fukuda says at Lower House budget panel:  
Refueling is "an effective tool for international cooperation"

MAINICHI ONLINE NEWS (Full)  
October 11, 2007, 12:26 p.m.

TOKYO 00004775 003 OF 015

Ryuko Tadokoro

The Lower House Budget Committee this morning went into its third day of interpellations, during which Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda was grilled on the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling operations now going on in the Indian Ocean. He was positively in his reply: "Japan looked for ways to help Afghanistan to become a peaceful country and reached the conclusion that refueling operations would lead to achieving that goal. So, Japan has been engaged in that mission. I believe this has been an effective tool for our international cooperation."

Asked whether Japan would participate in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) as called for by Ichiro Ozawa, president of the major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), Fukuda rejected the notion, saying: "It's not time for us to ask civilians (to be sent). And if we send the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) to ISAF, it could give rise to constitutional problems (such as the use of armed force). It would be prohibited under the Constitution."

(4) "Next Lower House election will be my final decisive battle,"  
Ozawa stresses at Rengo convention

Tokyo Shimbun Online (Full)  
12:46, October 11, 2007

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) Chairman Ichiro Ozawa in a speech given on the morning of Oct. 11 at the Japanese Trade Union Confederation's (Rengo) annual convention sought support for his party to win a victory in the next Lower House election. He underscored, "If the recent Upper House election was my finest battle, the upcoming Lower House election will be my final decisive battle."

He highly praised the outcome of the Upper House election, which has led to the trading of places there between the ruling and opposition camps, as a major turning point in Japan's postwar politics. He told DPJ members to brace themselves, noting, "There is fear that the confidence we gained from winning the Upper House election could lead to overconfidence and negligence."

Hisaoki Kamei of the People's New Party said, "Now that the opposition dominates in the Upper House, we are in a responsible position. We want to make a policy switch with combined strength centered on the DPJ and link it to a Lower House election."

Social Democratic Party (SDP) chairman Mizuho Fukushima gave a speech after Ozawa left. She pointed out, "The trading of places between the ruling and opposition camps in the Upper House is impossible without participation by the SDP." Then, regarding Ozawa's call for Japan to take part in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, she said, "The Self-Defense Forces' involvement in the ISAF is clearly unconstitutional. We

cannot approve of it."

(5) Editorial: Now is not time to reach a conclusion on SDF participation in ISAF

SANKEI (Page 2) (Full)  
October 11, 2007

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa's proposal

TOKYO 00004775 004 OF 015

for Japan's participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan has caused complications in the debate on new legislation to replace the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law.

Ozawa's proposal might be intended to block an extension of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling operation in the Indian Ocean. In such a case, it might be natural that the government is taking precautions against the DPJ's attempt to present an extension of the MSDF operation. Without focusing their interest in this proposal, lawmakers should thoroughly discuss the new legislation.

When considering the possibility that the war on terror might be prolonged, however, it may be significant to consider in what form the SDF should join the ISAF in the future. The Ozawa proposal contains many points that should be fully discussed, such as conditions for the Self-Defense Force (SDF) to engage in collective security under the United Nations.

Writing for the November issue of the monthly Sekai, Ozawa expressed his opposition to the government's plan to continue the MSDF refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, based on the perception that since the mission is designed to support "the war in Afghanistan, a self-defensive war waged by the US," and falls under the use of collective self-defense, the MSDF mission itself is impermissible.

Despite such an argument, Ozawa expressed his desire to translate his idea of having the SDF join the ISAF into action. This proposal is based on his stock argument that SDF troops are constitutionally allowed to participate in peacekeeping operations (PKO) endorsed by a UN resolution, even if the duty entails the use of armed force.

But the government's interpretation is that the SDF is not allowed to join PKO that entails the use of force even if the operations are carried out by a UN force or a multinational force under a UN resolution.

In accordance with this government's interpretation, Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba and Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura have rejected Ozawa's idea as unconstitutional. There is also the fact that the dispatch of SDF ground units involves greater danger than refueling operations by the MSDF.

Views in the DPJ on the Ozawa idea are also split, but those in favor of the proposal have discussed the possibility of having troops engage in such duties as provisional reconstruction teams (PRT) composed of personnel from the military and the private sector, which are closely linked to the ISAF, guarding Japanese nationals engaged in medical support or infrastructure construction, and rear support for the ISAF.

The government and the ruling coalition should initially discuss these themes. Discussing these matters will naturally cover the issue of whether to enact a permanent law on SDF dispatch, instead of the current way of dispatch under limited-time legislation.

It is not wrong that Ozawa has raised an issue, and the government should not intentionally avoid constitutional issues. Even so, now is the time to mull how to extend the fight against terrorism in the Indian Ocean.

TOKYO 00004775 005 OF 015

(6) Editorial: Questions still remain about possible oil diversion

ASAHI (Page 3) (Full)  
October 11, 2007

At the House of Representatives Budget Committee, fierce discussions have begun on the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling operation in the Indian Ocean. But many questions are still hanging over the operation.

The focus is on the fact that a US supply ship that had received oil from the MSDF in the Indian Ocean refueled a US aircraft carrier engaged in the Iraq operation. As a result, the oil from Japan is now suspected to have been used in the Iraq operation.

The suspicion first surfaced in May 2003 when the Diet was discussing an extension of the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. The government back then offered the following explanation:

The MSDF gave 200,000 gallons of oil -- the volume consumed in one day by the aircraft carrier. The aircraft carrier must have used it up before entering the Persian Gulf. It was impossible for the Japanese oil to be used in the Iraq theater. This is what then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda told the Diet.

But it became clear later on that the MSDF actually gave 800,000 gallons of oil, that the refueled aircraft carrier entered the Persian Gulf in less than a day, and that it navigated toward Iraq.

Prime Minister Fukuda indicated yesterday that the data was incorrect and apologized for it.

The amount is not the only issue here. The government extended the Antiterrorism Law by denying the suspected diversion of Japanese oil based on 200,000 gallons. The grounds for the government's denial have collapsed with the correction of the volume to 800,000 gallons, raising questions about the validity of the refueling mission at the same time.

Didn't the government tell a lie in order to extend the law? This question from Democratic Party of Japan lawmaker Naoto Kan is quite natural. Then Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda is now the prime minister and then Defense Agency Director-General Ishiba is the defense minister. They are now being pressed for setting the record straight.

Before long, the government plans to submit to the Diet a bill for continuing the refueling operation. In order to enact the bill, the government must bring the matter to closure properly. That cannot be done by just blaming the government official who reported the wrong number.

In a bid to dispel suspicions, the defense minister offered the new explanation that although the aircraft carrier had entered the Persian Gulf, it was engaged only in the operation in Afghanistan for three days, during which the carrier is believed to have used the Japanese oil.

The movements of the carrier-based aircraft from the Persian Gulf to Afghanistan require flights over Iran, with which the United States has no diplomatic ties. In reality, such is hardly possible. This leaves the option of making a large detour. Even if that is what

TOKYO 00004775 006 OF 015

they did, that still sounds unnatural.

To begin with, transiting toward Iraq in the Persian Gulf is an action in the Iraq operation and appears to be a deviation of the objectives of the Antiterrorism Law.

Furthermore, Japanese oil might have been used by some vessels other than this aircraft carrier in the Iraq war. Supply ships account for 60 PERCENT of the fuel provided by the MSDF to US vessels. How was the Japanese oil eventually used? A decision cannot be made unless the entire refueling data are disclosed.

It is good that the government has begun disclosing data bit by bit, through the explanation of that level is insufficient to convince the Diet and general public.

(7) MSDF-refueled USS Iwo Jima participated in Iraq war

AHAKATA (Page 1) (Full)  
October 11, 2007

In September last year, a US Navy amphibious assault ship, codenamed "Iwo Jima," was refueled in September last year by the Maritime Self-Defense Force's supply ship Mashu. The USS Iwo Jima then participated in attack operations conducted in Afghanistan. Shortly thereafter, the USS Iwo Jima, again refueled by the Mashu, participated in the Iraq war, too. This fact became known from US military documents. This shows that MSDF-supplied fuel was diverted to back up the Iraq war against Japan's Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, which only purports to support the Afghan war.

The US Navy says on its website that the Mashu refueled the USS Iwo Jima in the Persian Gulf on Sept. 22 last year. According to the US Marine Corps' Marine Corps News dated Dec. 4 last year, an expeditionary strike group (ESG), centering on the USS Iwo Jima, arrived later in the Persian Gulf by early October and Iwo Jima-based Harrier attack fighters, which are vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) jets, went on a mission to back up British troops near the southern Iraqi city of Basra.

In mid-October last year, ESG ground troops from the US Marines participated in an operation conducted in the western Iraqi province of Ambar. On Nov. 1 last year, one of those attack soldiers was killed in a roadside bomb's blast.

The ESG was deployed to areas near the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean during the period of six months from June 6 last year through Dec. 6. During the period of four months from July 4 through Nov. 8, the ESG arrived in US Central Command (CENTCOM) areas. CENTCOM commands operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

From mid-July on, the ESG was involved in Israeli attacks on Lebanon. After that, in September, the ESG carried out joint training exercises with Pakistan's naval forces. The ESG does not seem to have conducted maritime interdiction operations (MIO) backed up by Japan's Self-Defense Forces.

The ESG is said to have been tasked mainly with its direct support for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq during its voyage at that time. The Marine Corps News also reported in its Nov. 10 edition and confirmed that Iwo Jima-based Harrier attack fighters carried out combat flights in Afghanistan and Iraq.

TOKYO 00004775 007 OF 015

On Sept. 4 last year, the Mashu refueled the USS Iwo Jima in the Arabian Sea. After that, Harrier attack fighters from the Iwo Jima made a total of 136 attack flights to raid Afghanistan. This fact has already been revealed.

(8) Yokota base spills 5,600 liters of fuel

ASAHI (Page 34) (Full)  
October 6, 2007

The US Air Force's Yokota base in Tokyo caused an accidental spill of jet fuel, amounting to about 5,600 liters, at its oil depot in September, sources revealed yesterday. The day the accident took place, US Forces Japan reported its occurrence to local governments through the Japanese government. However, the local governments did not disclose it to their residents, saying there would be no off-base impact.

The Yokota base is located across six municipalities, including the cities of Tachikawa and Akishima. According to the two cities' officials, there was a report from the North Kanto Defense Bureau on Sept. 18, at around 10 a.m., notifying them that jet oil

accidentally spilled from the base's oil depot. USFJ first reported that the spill was about 1,200 liters. The following day, however, it was changed to about 5,600 liters. There was no detailed report about injuries or an impact on the base's neighboring environment, they said.

According to US military data, there were a total of 90 spills, including fuel, at the Yokota base and related facilities between 1999 and 2006. Among those spill incidents, Japan was aware of only one incident that took place at a communication facility in the city of Tokorozawa, Saitama Prefecture. In that incident, light oil spilled to the extent of about 79,000 liters. The Tokyo metropolitan government and local governments hosting the Yokota base asked the Japanese government this spring to provide information without delay.

"We were told that there would be no impact on the base's outside environment, so we judged there was no need to make it public," says an official of Akishima City, which is a point of contact representing the six base-hosting municipalities.

(9) Poll on Fukuda cabinet, political parties, MSDF refueling mission

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
October 10, 2007

#### Questions & Answers

(Figures shown in percentage. Parentheses denote the results of a survey taken in September.)

Q: Do you support the Fukuda cabinet?

Yes 59.1

No 26.7

Other answers (O/A) 3.1

No answer (N/A) 11.2

Q: (Only for those who answered "yes" to the foregoing question)

TOKYO 00004775 008 OF 015

Pick up to two reasons for your approval of the Fukuda cabinet.

I can appreciate its political stance 25.3

It's stable 43.7

The prime minister is trustworthy 28.5

Something can be expected of its economic policy 8.0

Something can be expected of its foreign policy 8.6

Because it's a coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and New Komeito 6.5

Because the prime minister is from the LDP 13.2

Because it's better than its predecessors 19.25.4

O/A+N/A

Q: (Only for those who answered "no" to the foregoing question) Pick up to two reasons for your disapproval of the Fukuda cabinet.

I can't appreciate its political stance 28.8

It's unstable 25.7

The prime minister is untrustworthy 23.6

Nothing can be expected of its economic policy 26.9

Nothing can be expected of its foreign policy 12.0

Because it's a coalition of the Liberal Democratic Party and New Komeito 20.1

Because the prime minister is from the LDP 14.7

It's worse than its predecessors 4.8

O/A+N/A 5.8

Q: How long would you like the Fukuda cabinet to continue? Pick only one from among those listed below.

As long as possible 32.3

2 or 3 years 25.3

1 year or so 18.7

Quit as early as possible 8.8

O/A 0.4

N/A 7.2

Q: Which political party do you support now? Pick only one.

Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) 37.8 (29.3)  
Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto) 18.0 (20.9)  
New Komeito (NK) 2.9 (3.3)  
Japanese Communist Party (JCP) 2.5 (1.8)  
Social Democratic Party (SDP or Shaminto) 0.9 (1.0)  
People's New Party (PNP or Kokumin Shinto) --- (0.2)  
New Party Nippon (NPN or Shinto Nippon) 0.1 (0.2)  
Other political parties --- (---)  
None 36.9 (42.4)  
N/A 0.8 (1.0)

Q: What's your impression of Prime Minister Fukuda and DPJ President Ozawa? Which one between the two do you think is more impressive than the other? Answer on the following four points: (a) leadership ability; (b) political ideal and goal; (c) public accountability; (d) friendliness.

(a) (b) (c) (d)  
Prime Minister Fukuda 47.1 48.1 52.3 69.1  
DPJ President Ozawa 39.0 34.1 30.2 17.7  
N/A 13.9 17.9 17.5 13.2

Q: How do you think the opposition parties should deal with the

TOKYO 00004775 009 OF 015

Fukuda cabinet in Diet discussions on important matters and the budget? Pick only one from among those listed below.

Confront and drive it to step down 10.4  
Seek concessions from the ruling coalition and translate their policy proposals 20.0  
Explore common ground with the ruling coalition and compromise 51.0  
Fully cooperate with the ruling coalition 10.2  
N/A 8.4

Q: Based on the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, the government has sent Maritime Self-Defense Force ships to the Indian Ocean. The MSDF is currently tasked there with refueling and other activities for foreign naval ships backing up multinational forces conducting antiterror operations in Afghanistan. The MSDF's deployment there under the antiterror law is to end on Nov. 1. Do you support extending the MSDF's refueling mission there?

Yes 49.1  
No 37.2  
N/A 13.7

Q: Do you think the DPJ is competent enough to take office?

Yes 35.0  
No 50.3  
N/A 14.7

Polling methodology  
Date of survey: Oct. 6-7.  
Subjects of survey: 3,000 persons chosen from among all eligible voters throughout the country (at 250 locations on a stratified two-stage random sampling basis).  
Method of implementation: Door-to-door visits for face-to-face interviews.  
Number of valid respondents: 1,812 persons (60.4 PERCENT ).

(10) Japan-ROK joint poll on North Korea

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)  
October 2, 2007

Questions & Answers  
(Figures shown in percentage.)

Q: What's your image of North Korea?



Japan ROK  
Very good 0.5 1.8  
Good to a certain extent 0.7 33.1  
Bad to a certain extent 13.9 55.8  
Very bad 83.9 7.6  
No answer (N/A) 1.0 1.7

Q: What do you think Japan, China, and South Korea should work together to tackle on a priority basis over North Korea? If any, pick as many as you like from among those listed below.

Japan ROK  
Stop nuclear development 77.2 67.5  
Stop missile development and launch 61.9 44.4  
Resolve the abductions of Japanese and South Koreans 76.2 17.1

TOKYO 00004775 010 OF 015

Diplomatic normalization with North Korea 23.7 35.3  
Economic cooperation with North Korea 8.2 24.3  
Political, economic regime change in North Korea 21.2 28.9  
Urge North Korea to act as a member of the international community 28.4 18.6  
Other answers (O/A) 0.2 ---  
Nothing in particular 2.2 0.8  
N/A 1.0 0.6

Q: Based on an agreement reached at the six-party talks of Japan, China, South Korea, the United States, Russia, and North Korea over North Korea's nuclear issue, North Korea stopped operating five nuclear facilities in July. Do you think North Korea will abandon its nuclear development?

Japan ROK  
Yes 4.3 2.0  
Yes to a certain degree 10.5 38.7  
No to a certain degree 30.7 54.4  
No 51.0 3.5  
N/A 3.5 1.4

Polling methodology

Japan: The survey was conducted across the nation on Sept. 8-9 for face-to-face interviews. For the survey, a total of 3,000 persons were chosen from among the nation's voting population at 250 locations on a stratified two-stage random sampling basis. Answers were obtained from 1,787 persons.

South Korea: The survey was conducted across the nation from Aug. 21 through Sept. 4 for face-to-face interviews. For the survey, respondents were chosen from among males and females, aged 20 and over, at 121 locations with quota methodology on a stratified multistage sampling basis. Answers were obtained from 1,000 persons.

(11) Fiscal Reform Study Group resumes activities: Correction to growth strategy aimed at; Tug-of-war likely between Yosano, who attaches importance to fiscal reconstruction, and Hidenao Nakagawa

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Full)  
October 11, 2007

The Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) yesterday resumed the activities of the Fiscal Reform Study Group. The aim is to adjust the growth policy that puts off tax hikes on the premise of high economic growth. This is because with the Upper House election, the correction of income disparities and economic programs for local areas, which require a massive amount of fiscal resources, have surfaced as issues to be addressed. Former Chief Cabinet Secretary Kaoru Yosano, chairman of the panel, attaches importance to fiscal reconstruction, which requires solid funding resources, such as a hike in the consumption tax. However, many LDP members are cautious about the idea of increasing the tax. There is a sign of former Secretary General Hidenao Nakagawa, who played a leading role in the

SIPDIS  
implementation of the growth policy under the Koizumi and Abe

cabinets, restoring his presence. A tug-of-war between Yosano and Nakagawa will likely take place.

Yosano during the meeting yesterday hinted at his intention to launch discussion aimed at hiking the tax, noting, "When the

TOKYO 00004775 011 OF 015

government compiled the basic policy guidelines on economic and fiscal management and structural reforms last year, it did not pursue far-reaching discussions, such as to what extent the tax system should be reformed and which taxes should be reformed." Amid the government hastily considering putting on hold a policy of increasing medical fees shouldered by the elderly, many participants also voiced such views as that solid funding resources should be used to cover social security expenses, which are bound to increase, as former Environment Minister Shunichi Suzuki put it.

Yosano and Secretary General Sadakazu Tanigaki, an advisor to the panel, are in agreement on the idea of raising the consumption tax to about 10 PERCENT in the 2010s. In contrast to the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto), which is opposing a consumption tax hike, Yosano stressed, "It is necessary for the LDP as a responsible party to come up with a just argument." His statement was also aimed at paving the way for discussions on the annual tax code revisions for fiscal 2008. Chief Cabinet Secretary Nobutaka Machimura during a press conference on Oct. 10 backed Yosano's statement, noting, "We must not be overly optimistic in recapitalizing public finances." The panel in its interim report proposed raising the consumption tax rate to between 12 PERCENT -15 PERCENT. However, when Nakagawa took on the position of chairman of the panel in October 2005, he switched the panel's policy to achieving nominal growth rate of 4 PERCENT -5 PERCENT and to a spending cut policy. Nakagawa started to dispel the mood of raising the consumption tax, backed by former Internal Minister Heizo Takenaka.

The venue of the discussion was shifted to the Council on Package Reform of Fiscal and Economic Policies of the government and the ruling camp, but Takenaka and Nakagawa maintained leadership. The basic policy guidelines for fiscal 2005 did not include a tax hike.

Yosano is staging an uphill fight for a rollback. Nakagawa also took office as chief organizer of the Machimura faction. He said, "The reform and growth policy must be continued for another 20 years." The battle between Yosano and Nakagawa could flare up again.

(12) Strong action, including economic sanctions, necessary toward Burma

ASAHI (Page 17) (Abridged)  
October 11, 2007

Kei Nemoto, professor of modern history of Burma at Sophia University

Monks marched in a demonstration in Myanmar (Burma), chanting a sutra with a number of citizens walking together. Burma is now under the control of the military junta. This scene of demonstrating monks drew international attention. The demonstrating monks were protesting against 19 years of oppression by the military junta and were calling for democracy.

As security police fired at demonstrators, average citizens were in danger of being shot. As a result, the demonstrations have ceased, but this does not mean the democracy movement has now come to an end. It is unlikely that the Burmese people, most of whom are Buddhists, can easily pardon violence done to monks. If the military slackens its violent oppression, protest marches will come back.

TOKYO 00004775 012 OF 015

The people of Burma usually listen to domestic news not reported by the military junta by tuning in the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) Burmese language shortwave programs. In the recent

demonstrations, the Internet played a significant role in addition to BBC. Although only a few percent of the population can access the Internet even in Yangon (Rangoon), images and information sent by some Burmese to the rest of the world via the Internet spread widely in Burma afterwards with those images and information sent back to the country. The Internet indeed demonstrated its power.

The military junta insists that foreign countries pulled wires behind the scenes, denying that monks and ordinary citizens were voluntarily staging demonstrations. The account by the military junta lacks persuasiveness.

The monks have renounced the world. They rely on donations from Buddhist believers for their daily needs and to maintain the pagodas and other religious facilities. Monks devote themselves to religious training and self-salvation. On the other hand, believers accumulate virtuous deeds by helping monks.

This interdependence between monks and believers make their ties even closer. Monks listen to believers' hardships and learn about their terrible living conditions and their complaints against politics. Monks essentially should not be involved in politics. Both monks and believers are well aware of this point. Monks in Burma, however, have a patriotic history of playing a part in the struggle for independence from the United Kingdom, when Burma was a colony.

Late this September, Special Envoy Gambari to the United Nations secretary general visited Burma and met with Than Shwe, chairman of

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the State Peace and Development Council and conveyed international concerns to him. Even though the international community responds rigorously to the military junta, there is little possibility that it immediately can change the military junta's current stance. Yet, by doing so, the international community can send Burma a strong message that could give moral support to the Burmese people who suffer oppression from the military junta.

The people of Burma, who fear being shot by guns and suffer under a reign of terror, would be grateful if other countries took strong actions against Burma, such as economic sanctions against the military junta and recalling their ambassadors from Burma. They would see such as a message that "the international community is not ignoring the Burmese people's hardships." The Japanese government therefore needs to keep this point in mind when it considers how to respond to the military junta.

(13) How about food safety? BSE (Part 4): How to gain consumers' understanding of BSE risk

ASAHI (Page 3) (Full)  
October 11, 2007

The Chiba prefectural government posted on its web Oct. 4 the results of a survey on BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) measures.

While showing the Food Safety Commission's opinion that the risk of BSE to humans is extremely low even if cattle under the age of 20 months are excluded from the scope of testing, the prefectural government questioned its residents on the Internet whether BSE

TOKYO 00004775 013 OF 015

inspections of young cattle were necessary. A total of 130 residents responded: 64 PERCENT said that the inspections were necessary and 18 PERCENT answered that they were not. As a result, the view calling for continued inspections was strong. Akira Doi, head of the Food Safety Measures Office of the prefectural government commented: "The actual state of BSE measures is not understood by the public. I think there is a lack of risk communication."

Risk communication means that people from various areas share their knowledge about risks and deepen their understanding. The FSC, which places importance on the risk communication, held more than 150 sessions to exchange opinions on the BSE to explain the low BSE infection risk of cattle aged 20 months and younger. Some

participants in the BSE sessions raised views coming around to the FSC, while there were views opposing the easing of the restrictions, with one participant saying, "I have doubts about the scientific basis."

The FSC was established in the Cabinet Office in response to the BSE panic after discovery of an apparent case of mad cow disease. The commission evaluates a potential risk of food at the request of the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare. Most of the 56 commission staffers are employees on loan. It sometimes happens that a person in charge of the secretariat returns to the health ministry and asks the FSC for food evaluation.

Consumer groups have criticized the FSC for giving unilateral explanations and "seal of approval" to the health ministry. In an attempt to improve risk communication, the FSC as risk evaluation organ is required to keep its independence and enhance public confidence.

Reasons for people concerned about BSE

Because of BSE cases that became problems in the past 31.8 PERCENT  
Doubtful about whether firms obey regulations and sanitary management 26.9 PERCENT  
Doubts about scientific basis 11.8 PERCENT  
Lack of information on food safety 8.7 PERCENT  
Insufficient standards and requirement to label 8.1 PERCENT  
Vague anxiety 5.2 PERCENT  
No response, invalid answers 7.5 PERCENT

(14) Editorial: DPJ has yet to reach consensus on antiterrorism

MAINICHI (Page 5) (Excerpts)  
October 11, 2007

Although the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) had former three party heads appear at a House of Representatives Budget Committee session yesterday to question Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda, the three failed to conduct a penetrating debate on the new antiterrorism bill.

The reason may be that DPJ President Ichiro Ozawa's assertion that the Self-Defense Forces can participate in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, while opposing the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, has confused the party's stance and cast a pall over their pursuit of the government.

Both former DPJ heads Naoto Kan and Katsuya Okada failed to question the prime minister problematic points of a new legislation the

TOKYO 00004775 014 OF 015

government plans to submit to the Lower House. Former President Seiji Maehara, an expert on security policy, did not even question this point.

It is undeniable that the DPJ gave the impression that it avoided getting deeply involved in the debate on possible SDF participation in the ISAF out of fear of a slip of the tongue.

It is true that Japan has advocated foreign policy-centered on the United Nations and on the axis of Japan-US relations, but it places more priority on the relations with the United States. Therefore, Ozawa's awareness of the issue that the principle of security should be reviewed on this occasion is understandable.

However, his assertion that the SDF can take part in ISAF, in which fatalities have occurred, is a great leap of logic. It is difficult to understand his view that the SDF cannot supply oil but can join the ISAF because Ozawa has stated that there is no contradiction between the foreign policy of centering on the UN and that of centering on the US.

Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura yesterday told Okada, who asked about requirements for SDF dispatch: "So, it is not so easy for the SDF to join ISAF." Okada did not offer a counterargument. This was a symbolic scene that showed Okada's perplexity at Ozawa's assertion.

How long does the government intend to continue the refueling operations though there is no prospect for an end of the Afghan war, which has continued for six years. The DPJ should pursue this point and present its own bill. Otherwise, the ruling and opposition camps will not find common ground during Diet debate.

(Corrected copy) Diet debate: Defense minister learns from US that amount of fuel provided by MSDF to USS Kitty Hawk was 675,000 gallons

YOMIURI (Page 9) (Excerpts)  
October 11, 2007

Refueling mission in Indian Ocean

Kan (Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ)): On the morning of Feb. 25, 2003, the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) supply ship Tokiwa refueled the US supply ship Pecos, and on the afternoon of that day, Pecos refueled the USS Kitty Hawk. In this regard, then Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda stated positively at a press briefing on May 9 that it would be impossible to use (the fuel provided by Tokiwa) for operations in Iraq.

Prime Minister Fukuda: There was an error in collecting data. What I said at the time was incorrect.

Kan: Which part of your remark at the time was wrong?

Fukuda: I made two mistakes. First, the amount of fuel provided by Japan to the US supply ship (was 800,000 gallons in actuality) but it was mistakenly entered into the computer system as 200,000 gallons. Afterwards, we on the part of the government explained that the amount of fuel provided by (Pecos) to Kitty Hawk was 800,000 gallons, but we learned after inquiring of the US about this matter that the amount of fuel in question was 675,000 gallons.

TOKYO 00004775 015 OF 015

Kan: I have a suspicion that then Chief Cabinet Secretary Fukuda might have known that Kitty Hawk had headed for the Persian Gulf.

Defense Minister Ishiba: Tokiwa refueled Pecos during the period from 6:30 a.m. through 10:00 a.m. of Feb. 25. The amount of fuel provided was 800,000 gallons. In order to join Kitty Hawk by noon, Pecos moved in the direction of the Strait of Hormuz. By around 20:00 p.m. of that day, Pecos completed refueling Kitty Hawk. The amount of fuel provided by Pecos to Kitty Hawk was 675,000 gallons. After being refueled, Kitty Hawk passed the Strait of Hormuz by 20:00 p.m. of Feb. 26 and was engaged in operations in the Persian Gulf.

According to the US report shown to us in 2003, Kitty Hawk consumed some 200,000 gallons of fuel per day on average. We have been told by the US side that Kitty Hawk was engaged in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), and that after being refueled by Pecos, Kitty Hawk "consumed all the fuel" provided by Pecos in three days starting Feb. 25.

Ishiba: The most important point is that Kitty Hawk was cruising for a considerably longer period of time at the high speed of 33 knots when it was passing through the Strait of Hormuz. It seemed that Kitty Hawk also was cruising at the high speed when it was engaged in several flight operations. I presume in these cases Kitty Hawk would have consumed more fuel than its average consumption. I therefore think the US side's explanation that (Kitty Hawk) consumed 675,000 gallons in three days or by the end of February is highly reasonable. It is thought that the fuel provided would have been used for OEF. Operation Southern Watch (ODW) in Iraq started in early March.

DONOVAN